

REMARKS

In the May 5, 2004 Office Action, all of claims 1-12 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claim 9 was rejected for failing to indicate and claim particularly and distinctly the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the May 5, 2004 Office Action, Applicant has amended the specification and claim 9 as indicated above. Thus, claims 1-12 are pending, with claims 1 and 7 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Specification

Applicant has found a typographical error upon review of the specification. Accordingly, Applicant has amended the specification as presented above. Applicant believes that the specification is now correct and complies with 37 CFR §1.71 and 37 CFR §1.75(d)(1).

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

On page 2 of the Office Action, claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In response, Applicant has amended claim 9 to clarify its language. Particularly, Applicant has amended claim 9 so that it depends from claim 8. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his helpful suggestion. Applicant believes that the claims now comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

On pages 2-10 of the Office Action, claims 1, 4-7, and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 10-117644 to Sato et al. ("Sato patent"). Claims 1, 4-7, and 10-12 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,311,913 to Yasui et al. ("Yasui patent"). Claims 1-3, 5-9, and 1-12 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,848,757 to Amano et al. ("Amano patent"). Claims 1-12 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,637,690 to Matsuda ("Matsuda patent"). Claims 1-12 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,572,042 to Sugawara ("Sugawara patent"). In response, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections based on the prior art.

More specifically, Applicant believes that none of the prior art of records discloses or suggests the first recessed portion that is formed *at a portion of the fixed shaft cover closest to the spool*, as required by claims 1 and 7 as originally filed. For example, in the structure shown in Figure 5 of the present application, where the fixed shaft cover has a cylindrical portion and a conical portion, the first recessed portion 46d is formed on the cylindrical portion 46f on a side closer to the conical portion 46e of the fixed shaft cover 46. *See* Figure 5, page 11, lines 12-14. In other words, in the structure as shown in Figure 5, the portion of the fixed shaft cover closest to the spool is a portion of the cylindrical portion at the border between the cylindrical portion and the conical portion. Applicant believes that none of the prior art of references shows a first recessed portion that is formed at the portion of the fixed shaft cover closest to the spool.

Sato Patent

The Office Action asserts that the recessed portion 44d corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7. The fixed shaft cover 44 of the Sato patent clearly has a conical portion and a cylindrical portion. However, as clearly seen in Figure 5, the recessed portion 44d of the Sato patent is formed in the conical portion of the fixed shaft cover 44, not the cylindrical portion thereof. In other words, the recessed portion 44d is *not* formed at a portion of the fixed shaft cover 44 that is the closest to the spool. Therefore, Applicant believes that the Sato patent does not satisfy the requirement of claims 1 and 7 as originally filed.

Yasui Patent

The Office Action on page 5 asserts that the unnumbered concaved portion of the fixed shaft cover 10 of the Yasui patent corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7. The fixed shaft cover 10 of the Yasui patent clearly has a conical portion and a cylindrical portion. However, as seen in Figure 2 of the Yasui patent, the concaved portion is clearly formed in the conical portion of the fixed cover shaft 10. In other words, the concaved portion of the Yasui patent is *not* formed at a portion of the fixed shaft cover 10 that is the closest to the spool. Therefore, Applicant believes that the Yasui patent does not satisfy the requirement of claims 1 and 7 as originally filed, whether taken singularly or in combination with the Sato patent.

Amano Patent

The Office Action on page 5 asserts that the hollow space 15 of the bail mounting member 6 of the Amano patent corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7. However, as seen in Figures 2-5 of the Amano patent, the hollow space 15 is clearly formed on a side of the fixed shaft cover 6 *away* from the spool, *not* at a portion of the bail mounting member 6 closest to the spool as required by claims 1 and 7. Therefore, Applicant believes that the Amano patent does not satisfy the requirement of claims 1 and 7 as originally filed, whether taken singularly or in combination with the Sato patent and the Yasui patent.

Matsuda Patent

Although the Office Action seems to assert that the Matsuda patent discloses a structure that corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7, it is not clear to the Applicant which structure the Office Action is referring to when it discusses "a first recessed portion being disposed to interpose the second end of the bail 15 between the first recessed portion and the first guide portion, the first recessed portion being formed by making a portion of the fixed shaft cover 21 closest to the spool recessed" on page 8. Applicant's representative has made attempts to reach the Examiner in charge to resolve this ambiguity. Particularly, Applicant's representative has left a telephone message asking the Examiner to clarify this rejection on June 29, 2004. But the telephone message was not returned.

Applicant believes that the Matsuda patent does not disclose or suggest the first recessed portion as set forth in claims 1 and 7. Clearly, Figures 2-6 all show the fixed shaft cover 21 only partially. Figures 2-6 disclose no recessed portion formed on the surface of the fixed shaft cover 21. Accordingly, Applicant believes that the Matsuda patent does not satisfy the requirement of claims 1 and 7 as originally filed, whether taken singularly or in combination with the Sato patent, the Yasui patent, and the Amano patent.

Sugawara Patent

The Office Action on page 9 asserts that the void 11d of the stationary shaft cover 11 corresponds to the first recessed portion of claims 1 and 7. The fixed shaft cover 11 of the Sugawara patent clearly has a conical portion and a cylindrical portion. However, as clearly seen in Figure 2, the void 11d of the Sugawara patent is formed in the conical portion of the stationary shaft cover 11, not the cylindrical portion thereof. In other words, the void 11d is *not* formed at a portion of the stationary shaft cover 11 that is the closest to the spool, as required by claims 1 and 7. Therefore, Applicant believes that the Sugawara patent does not satisfy the requirement of claims 1 and 7 as originally filed, whether taken singularly or in

combination with the Sato patent, the Yasui patent, the Amano patent, and the Matsuda patent.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 7, as originally filed, are not anticipated by the prior art of record. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Dependent Claims

Moreover, Applicant believes that the dependent 2-6 and 8-12 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1 and 7, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Since the prior art of record does not anticipate the independent claims 1 and 7, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims 2-6 and 8-12.

Furthermore, Applicant believes that the dependent claims 2 and 8 are further allowable because they include additional limitations. More specifically, claims 2 and 8 require a second recessed portion that is connected at least partially with the first recessed portion. Applicant believes that none of the prior art of record discloses or suggests a fixed shaft cover that has the first and second recessed portions as defined in claims 2 and 8.

Regarding the Sato patent and the Yasui patent, the Office Action concedes that they do not disclose or suggest the second recessed portion.

Regarding the Amano patent, the Office Action on page 6 asserts that the through holes 100 correspond to the second recessed portion of claims 2 and 8. The Office Action further asserts that the through holes 100 interpose the end of the bail 5 between the through holes 100 and the line guide 11. However, as clearly seen in Figure 3, the end of the bail 5 connects to the end of the line guide 11. There is no disclosure or suggestion in the Amano patent that the end of the bail 5 is interposed between the line guide 11 and the hollow space 15. Furthermore, although the Office Action asserts that the through holes 100 are at least partially connected to the hollow space 15, the through holes 100 and the hollow space 15 are *not* connected on a side of the bail mounting member 6 closer to the line roller 8, as required by claims 2 and 8. Therefore, Applicant believes that the Amano patent does not satisfy the requirements of claims 2 and 8.

Regarding the Matsuda patent, although the Office Action seems to assert that the Matsuda patent discloses a structure that corresponds to the second recessed portion of claims 2 and 8, it is not clear to the Applicant which structure the Office Action is referring to when


it discusses on page 8 "a second recessed portion disposed such that the second end of the bail 15 is interposed between the second recessed portion and the first guide portion, the first recessed portion being disposed to connect at least partially with the second recessed portion on a side closer to said line roller 23, as seen in Figures 2-6." As discussed above, Figures 2-6 all show the fixed shaft cover 21 only partially. There is no recessed portion formed on the surface of the fixed shaft cover 21. Accordingly, Applicant believes that the Matsuda patent does not show the second recessed portion of claims 2 and 8 as originally filed.

Regarding the Sugawara patent, it is not clear to the Applicant which structure the Office Action is referring to when it discusses on page 10 "a second recessed portion, as seen in Figure 3, disposed such that the second end of the bail 13 is interposed between the second recessed portion and the first guide portion 11b, the first recessed portion 11d being disposed to connect at least partially with the second recessed portion on a side closer to said line roller 12, as seen in Figures 2-3." Applicant believes that Figures 2 and 3 of the Sugawara patent show no structure that corresponds to the second recessed portion of claims 2 and 8. Accordingly, Applicant believes that the Sugawara patent does not show the second recessed portion of claims 2 and 8 as originally filed.

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-12 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Dated: July 30, 2004

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